

Konatsu Masquerade Soliloquy: Ranma

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Summary: Ukyou asks a difficult favor of her kunoichi...

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><br>You all know that I love her dearly. I would do anything for her.

>When her dream finally died, she went into seclusion for a number of  
<br>days. I would go up to her room at every opportunity to assure myself

>that she was all right, to bring her meals up to her, or anything else  
<br>she requested. I would also ask, every time I was there, if she were

>willing to talk about it, if she would open her door. Over time, her  
<br>'no's gradually withered, and finally, one day, she opened the door to

>her apartment and let me in.<br>

>I had never been allowed inside the sanctum that was her apartment; to  
<br>be sure, I had never so much as dared to ask. This was Ukyou-sama's

>home, after all -- it was not my place to be here. But she had invited  
<br>me in this day... perhaps she would be willing to unburden herself by

>talking to me about her feelings, maybe try to get over him.  
<br>Something, anything...

><br>...No such thing. With a smile and a wave, she disappeared into her

>bedroom. "Hang on a moment... let me show you this...." She emerged  
<br>holding a familiar red Chinese-style shirt. I had no idea where she'd

>gotten it from, and it wasn't my place to pry. "Would you be willing  
<br>to try this on?"

><br>I took it, my hand trembling as I did. I knew where this was going to

>lead, but I thought it would keep her happy if I did what she asked.  
<br>It fit me well, and the dreamy look on Ukyou-sama's face was one

I  
>vowed to keep there. If I had to wear this shirt to do it, I  
would.<br>  
>In fact, the next day I decided to go the extra mile for her sake: I  
<br>had my long hair cut to shoulder length, and tied what remained  
back  
>into a pigtail. If she wanted me to remind her of Ranma, I would do  
my <br>best to look as much like him as possible. When it was done, I  
looked  
>in the mirror at the finished work. I'm not ruggedly handsome the  
way <br>he is, but if you squint a bit, you could see a resemblance  
if you  
>wanted to. Just looking at my reflection made me want to puff out my  
<br>chest a bit. I watched as a slightly cocky grin creased my face.

>There, now I was starting to look like him.<br>  
>As I returned to the Ucchan, I even went so far as to walk along the  
<br>tops of the fences lining the way. I slid open the restaurant  
door  
>with my foot, and...<br>  
>and...<br>  
>...and I couldn't say anything. The look in her eyes was one of pure  
<br>joy, a look that I had never truly seen in her before. She seemed

>grateful to me for being willing to become Ranma. I smiled as I  
<br>gazed into her eyes, and I knew that this was the happiest moment  
of my  
>life.<br>  
>And I knew just how short-lived it would be.<br>  
>"Ran-chan..." <br>  
>It was the turning point. She would never call me by my real name  
<br>again. Perhaps it shouldn't have bothered me so... 'call me but  
'love'  
>and I'll be new baptized', wasn't that how the line went? I felt a  
<br>slight nagging in the back of my mind even then, reminding me of  
the  
>fate of the young man who said those words.<br>  
>"You like it, Ukyou-sama?"<br>  
>She winced, almost imperceptibly. "Don't you remember? I'm 'Ucchan,'  
<br>sugar..."  
><br>The word caught in my throat. Ucchan. How disrespectful that  
would be  
>of me! How dare I be so familiar with this woman who rescued me from  
<br>my step-family, who had granted me gainful employment, who I owed  
so  
>much to! She deserved more honor from me than even the name  
'Ukyou-<br>sama' could bestow. But what else could I do to show her  
my devotion?  
><br>I could do what she asked, that was what else. I took a deep  
breath,  
>and let fly. "H-hiya, Uk... Uk...Uk... chan."<br>  
>Oh, how her face just lit up! She vaulted over the counter and  
bounded <br>over to me, wrapping me up in an embrace that told me  
that Ranma had no  
>idea what he had lost out on. And if he did, he would have  
surrendered <br>everything for it, just as I had.  
><br>\*\*\*  
><br>Over the following weeks, she began to treat me as the  
'Ran-chan' she  
>had so dreamed of making hers. We sparred, we talked, she fed me

<br>copious amounts of okonomi-yaki. There were even days when she refused

>to let me wait on the patrons, letting me just sit and enjoy the  
<br>ambiance of the Ucchan, our home.

><br>It was a rather idyllic life, as the real Ranma never seemed to darken

>the door of the Ucchan anymore. I don't know how Ukyou-sama would have  
<br>taken it were he to appear, but I know it was embarrassing enough to

>have encountered him by myself. I continued to practice walking on  
<br>fences when I nearly collided with him and Akane (he was apparently

>teaching her the art of balance, too).<br>

>He jumped off the fence, pulling Akane by the hand. She stepped back  
<br>as he dropped into a battle stance. "All right, Ken... what is it this

>time?"<br>

>I jumped down and shook my head, my confidence shattered. There was no  
<br>way to be a passable imitation when the genuine article was standing

>barely a meter away. "No, Ranma... it's... it's Konatsu."<br>

>Both he and Akane were startled at this revelation. "Konatsu...? But  
<br>what are you doing... going around looking like... ?"

><br>I stared at the ground just in front of my toes. "Ukyou-sama misses you

>terribly, Ranma-san. I'm so sorry!" And I sprang to the fence,  
<br>catapulting myself onto a nearby rooftop. I had to get back to the

>Ucchan. I couldn't stay out here, and risk running into him now.<br>

>\*\*\*<br>

>I felt as if I had betrayed her by revealing myself to Ranma, however  
<br>inadvertently. But he never came around, never called, never tried to

>find out what was going on at the Ucchan, and so Ukyou-sama was none the  
<br>wiser.

><br>And then the day came...

><br>\*\*\*

><br>"Do you..." I could only give the justice of the peace a helpless shrug

>as he paused, waiting for me to give my name. With no more response than  
<br>that, he was forced to continue: "...take this woman to be your lawfully

>wedded wife?"<br>

>"Yes sir, I do." And I did. This wasn't playacting, this was for real.  
<br>I truly loved her, and I still truly do. I always will. Kami knows how

>much, considering what I'd given up for this moment.<br>

>"And do you, Ukyou Kuonji, take this man..."<br>

>"Yes!"<br>

>\*\*\*<br>

>I paused as I held the pen. Whose name goes on this marriage  
<br>certificate?

><br>"Go on, Ran-chan... why are you hesitating?" I had my answer. I

>steeled myself and placed the point of the pen to the paper:<br>

>Sao... tome... Ran... ma. <br>

>I pressed my thumb into the ink, and made an imprint by 'my'

signature, <br>praying that it would not be taken for a forgery. From  
this day forward,  
>I was he, as she decreed. I would answer to that name when summoned.  
<br>She would cry out that name when we made love. Henceforth, I  
\*was\* to  
>be Ranma Saotome.<br>  
>Konatsu Kenzan was no more... but if she was happy...<br>

End  
file.